

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 19 and 22 are hereby amended. Claims 1-18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 20, 21, and 23-33 have been withdrawn. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification as originally filed. It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 19 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over JP 10-329401 (hereinafter, merely the “401 patent”) in view of JP 2001-260406 (hereinafter, merely the “406 patent”).

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

“...a residue obtaining means for obtaining an amount of stencil material remaining in the stencil material roll, and

a thermal head controlling means which controls the heating energy to the thermal head on the basis of the amount of remaining stencil material obtained by the

residue obtaining means, such that the heating energy of the thermal head increases as the amount of remaining stencil material decreases..." (Emphasis added)

Claim 1 is generally directed to obtaining the amount of stencil material remaining in the stencil material roll, controlling the heating energy of the thermal head on the basis of the obtained amount of remaining stencil material. The heating energy of the thermal head increases as the amount of remaining stencil material decreases.

The Office Action asserts that the '401 patent discloses obtaining a residue of the stencil material in the stencil material roll and controlling the heating energy applied to the stencil material on the basis of the obtained residue.

However, as understood by Applicants, the '401 patent discloses obtaining the amount of stencil material remaining in the stencil material roll indirectly by obtaining the speed of rotation of the stencil material roll.

Furthermore, the '401 patent discloses only controlling the roller on the basis of the speed of the rotation of the stencil material roll, such that the speed of feeding the stencil material is constant. Therefore, the '401 patent does not disclose controlling the heating energy of the thermal head on the basis of the obtained amount of remaining stencil material such that the heating energy of the thermal head increases as the amount of remaining stencil material decreases.

Applicants submit that the '406 patent fails to make up for the deficient teaching of the '401 patent.

Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claim 19 is patentable.

III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

Claim 22 is dependent from independent claim 19 discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Similarly, because Applicants maintain that all claims are allowable for at least the reasons presented hereinabove, in the interests of brevity, this response does not comment on each and every comment made by the Examiner in the Office Action. This should not be taken as acquiescence of the substance of those comments, and Applicants reserve the right to address such comments.

CONCLUSION

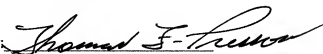
In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of the statements appearing above with respect to the disclosures in the cited reference, or references, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the reference, or references, providing the basis for a contrary view.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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